

State and County Medical Societies, Attention

THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION PASSED THE FOLLOWING VERY IMPORTANT RESOLUTION AT THE 1924 SESSION:

"WHEREAS, PERIODIC MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF ALL THE PEOPLE FROM BIRTH TO DEATH ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH; THEREFORE, BE IT

"RESOLVED, THAT STATE AND COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETIES BE URGED TO ENDORSE AS A PART OF THE HEALTH PROGRAM OF ORGANIZED MEDICINE THE MAKING OF THESE EXAMINATIONS:

"THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE RESPECTIVE SOCIETIES BE REQUESTED TO MAKE SUCH EXAMINATIONS IN THE HOMES OR IN THEIR OFFICES, FREE TO ANY PERSONS, WHO, BY REASON OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, REQUIRE SUCH FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION, AND

"THAT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WORK THE SAME SYMPATHETIC, CONFIDENTIAL RELATION BE MAINTAINED BETWEEN PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT OR FAMILY AS HAS EVER CHARACTERIZED THE EFFORTS OF TRUE PHYSICIANS."

state have consented to make these examinations. Each will be made in the office of one of the doctors in Reading. The result of the examination will be entirely confidential. The doctor volunteering must think he is well. He will send his name in to the secretary as a volunteer. He will receive a history blank, which he will fill in, putting thereto an examination of his urine, bearing on protein, specific gravity, sugar, roughly total 24-hour quantity. He will receive an appointment from the doctor to whom he is assigned, with a given date and hour, preferably on the first day of the meeting, the street and office number being set forth.

"This examination will be made at a given date and hour, and thereafter the examiner and the one examined will have a brief consultation as to how the examination could be bettered, as to how the history blank could be improved, as to how best this whole subject can be put to the profession in such wise that it will be generally adopted. The one examined will have excluded, insofar as this can be done, a hidden menace to his health. He will have demonstrated a method of examination which he is free to criticize. He will get home better prepared to carry out the general policy."

The only difficulty about the service is that of persuading the doctors to avail themselves of the opportunity.

Is it more "education" or more "gumption" that is needed?

MORE MAIL-ORDER DOCTORS

A non-medical concern, with headquarters in Chicago, is circularizing citizens and inviting paid membership in their longer living, stay well, periodic health examination, medicine by mail, plan. Their advertising matter forms a basis of inquiries from readers of Better Health Service and from both doctors and their patients. A San Francisco business man recently received a batch of this propaganda and turned it over to his physician (Harry Alderson), who in turn forwarded it to CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE for comment. The organization in question claims to be the original one in the personal practice—for a fee—of preventive medicine and life extension by periodic health examinations.

There is a "medical director," and emphasis is

placed upon the fact that he is a member of the Illinois Medical Association and the American Medical Association. He is presumably, therefore, an educated physician licensed to practice in Illinois. The advertising literature is not overly specific as to just what are the duties and responsibilities of the "medical director" in supervision of the laboratory work and in making the "copyrighted explanatory key and helpful suggestion" so "confidentially" supplied to the patients.

The propaganda is specific when it says: "*Our medical director gives on each report personal remarks upon your physical condition, and while we do not treat nor diagnose, we are always willing and ready to help our subscribers by writing a personal letter, advising them of the significance of the findings.*"

Again, in discussing the great value of the California patients' records in the central office in Chicago, the propaganda says that "*reference to them so often enables our medical director, in his comparisons, to note approaching trouble in time for it to be corrected by the simple means suggested in our reports.*"

This health-by-mail service, consisting essentially in a quarterly urine examination of old specimens sent by mail to Chicago, claims that only 5 per cent of 5000 patients had normal urine and that 2223 "subscribers" (patients) were "made normal" (cured) "through attention to our helpful suggestions." The patients of this medicine-by-mail organization are said to reside in all parts of the United States and Canada. The claim is also made that physicians endorse their SERVICE "when they understand there is no treatment connected with the bureau." Immediately following this sentence is a statement of a physician to the effect that "health insurance is coming and . . . the medical profession might just as well make up their minds to swallow it."

After all, "there is more than one way to skin a cat."

CHECKING UP ON DIAGNOSES

It is good for all of us to occasionally have a check-up on the reliability and accuracy of our diagnoses. This is best done by comparing clinical diag-